

## Robert Young Hayne to Andrew Jackson, June 5, 1827, from Correspondence of Andrew Jackson. Edited by John Spencer Bassett.

### ROBERT Y. HAYNE TO JACKSON.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Hayne was senator from South Carolina from 1823 to 1832. He was a leading nullifier and in this letter was evidently trying to get Jackson committed to his views before election. Jackson however was too shrewd to be caught.

Confidential

Charleston, June 5, 1827.

*My Dear General.* Nothing has prevented me from writing to you long since, but the belief that you must be *oppressed* by the number of your correspondents. You know me I trust too well, to attribute the omission to any want of attachment, to your person, or *your cause*—the cause certainly of the whole country. I have determined however to write to you now, because I think it important that you should be made acquainted with the views and feelings of your friends in various quarters of the Union, in order that you may be enabled to decide on your own course, with all the lights, which a variety of opinions can afford. I know that you always judge and act *for yourself*, and therefore feel the less scruple, in presenting my views, knowing that they will be carefully examined and will receive neither more, nor less weight than they are justly entitled to.

The *great contest* is obviously becoming every day warmer. It is now manifest that the men, who have usurped the reins of government, do not mean to surrender it, without a desperate struggle, and that they are determined if possible to sacrifice to their vengeance all those, who venture to oppose them. They are playing a desperate game, and their

## Library of Congress

motto is “to conquer or die”. Hence it is, that they have let loose “the floodgates of their wrath”, against yourself, Mr. Calhoun, and many others of your best friends, and so little discrimination do they make, that they do not hesitate to brand our estimable and excellent friend Judge White, as one of “the worst men in the worst Senate the Country has ever seen.” The spirit thus displayed originates from the consciousness of error. The men in power *know* , that they have done you personally, and done their country *wrong* , and that they have been detected and exposed; Hence the bitterness of their anger, and the recklessness of the course they are about to pursue. They are actuated by a spirit not unlike that which inspires a criminal flying from justice, who turns on his pursuers, and to save himself from exposure and merited punishment, attacks indiscriminately all who are in pursuit.

There is another circumstance to be taken into the account. Mr. Adams, who is not a practical man, has been persuaded to rely on Mr. Clay, as the only pillar that can sustain his administration. He has therefore practically yielded the reins of government to him, at least so far as relates to the new Department, of *political management*. We know Mr. Clay well enough, to understand the course that will be pursued in matters where his will is law. Altogether unprincipled, ambitious, daring, bold and without the smallest regard either to the courtesies or decencies of life, he inspires his political followers with a spirit not unlike that, which distinguishes a *savage warfare* —“sparing no age, sex, or condition”.

There is still another motive that lurks beneath the unmanly and ungenerous course of the Administration—it is the desire to betray you into some indiscretion. They have taken pains to impress the public mind with the belief that your *temper* unfits you for civil government, they know that a noble nature is always liable to excitement, and they *have put* , and will continue to put into operation, a hundred schemes to betray you into some act, or expression, which may be turned to their own advantage.

If I am not much mistaken, I have now exposed the true springs, which direct the movements of your political opponents. If I am right, we may pretty clearly discover their

## Library of Congress

future course of conduct, and by prudence and wisdom, not only avoid the snares, set for us, but cause them to be entangled in their own nets. It is certain, that far from abating in their violence, they will henceforth display greater and more indiscriminating fury, and as it is not in the nature of man to remain unkindled in a common blaze, we may be assured that the contest will wax warmer to the end. For this we must all be prepared. Every man must be resolved to take his share, of the slander, and abuse which will be levelled at him, and to act his part manfully in the fight. But more than this will be necessary, we must each of us, in his own person set an example, of prudence, and selfcommand, and endeavour to give a tone to all around us, which will in itself go far to secure the victory.

In your own personal conduct, your adversaries will endeavour to find something to assail—hitherto they have failed, and I have no doubt they will fail forever, if you are only sufficiently on your guard, not to be tempted to give utterance to the feelings of indignation which their conduct is so well calculated to produce. Mr. Clay *will use every effort to draw you into some public controversy*, whether on the question of *the Tariff*, or *his intrigues*, or any other matter, is to him not very material. He would thus divert public attention, from himself, and Mr. Adams, present you, perhaps, as an accuser, and at all events, insist that you were endeavouring to advance your own claims, and had relinquished the high ground of leaving your cause in the hands of the people. I doubt not that you will have *his partizans*, paying their respects to you *at the Hermitage*, and leading the way to the expression of your opinions on points capable of misrepresentation. Something has been already done in this way, and more will be attempted. In the mean time the administration presses will be loud in their calls for your opinions on the Tariff, internal improvements and other questions, on all of which Mr. Adams is as silent as the grave, and concerning which your opinions have been fully and clearly expressed in your *public and recorded acts*.

Mr. Adams and yourself stand on equality as the only Candidates for the Presidency. Will he answer questions? If so I should be glad to put him a few Interrogatories. But it is beneath *his* dignity it seems to respond to such questions, and let me ask whether one who has acted the part you have done, and whose principles have been uniformly

## Library of Congress

displayed by your actions, are to be compelled to vindicate those principles from the misrepresentations of every Newspaper Editor who has been paid to slander you? In relation to the two great questions of the *Tariff* and *internal improvements* , your opinions can need no elucidation. During the two years of your service in the Senate, and frequently since, your opinions have been publicly expressed. But does it follow that any one disposed to afford a moderate protection to American Industry or to enter upon a few great works of National Improvement, should support *every measure* which bears *the name* of a Tariff Bill, or Internal Improvement? The truth is, that the Administration, have determined, if possible to ride into power on these *popular Hobbies* , and as they intend to use them only *for their own advancement* , it is perfectly immaterial, what the character of the particular measure may be, which they are called upon to support. They have in fact, *perverted the whole system* of internal improvement, into a scheme of buying up the people, with their own money—while Mr. Clay's *American policy* has degenerated into a plan for granting to a few overgrown Incorporated Companies in *New England* an exclusive monopoly of the home market.

The Bill of the last session, was in its character *prohibitory* , encreased the Tax in exact proportion to the *poverty* of the person on whom it was to operate, and above all was calculated and *intended* to crush all the small manufacturers in the union while it gave a monopoly to the large companies. *This last feature* in the Bill will be found in the provision which leaves the Woollen goods, free from any encrease of duties 'till the last of August, the consequence of which must have been a great influx of foreign fabrics until that time, the consequent fall in prices, and the ruin of all who should be compelled to sell before that period, while immense fortunes would have been secured to *the rich* who could keep their goods on hand until the time, when they would have had a monopoly. Now the people of the South (as you know) are opposed to this system in any shape, but they can and always will distinguish, between those who supported the Tariff of 1824 (as modified in the Senate,) and those who advocate such a Bill as that of the last session, between one (who like yourself) looks to the moderate protection of manufactures, without

## Library of Congress

oppressing any branch of Industry, and one (who like Mr. Clay) wishes to form a party, and for purposes *purely selfish*, convert, the whole system of Internal Improvement and the Tariff into a political engine, of management, intrigue and corruption. I repeat, the high and honorable ground on which you have always stood, of affording judicious protection to all the great interests of the Country, suppressing none, must sustain you against the misrepresentation of your enemies, and though we at the South, deny the power of Congress to legislate on these points, yet, we feel that our interests would always be safe in your hands.

Notwithstanding the boastful language of the partizans of power, you may be assured that the cause of the people is safe *in this quarter of the union*. Of all the Southern States, I consider Louisiana alone as at all doubtful. *South Carolina* is as fixed as “the everlasting hills which cannot be moved”, and if New York can be retained in *her present temper* the contest will not be doubtful. But the victory is not yet won. There will be a fierce and hard battle during the next session of Congress, and the utmost zeal, firmness, and prudence will be necessary on the part of all your friends and supporters. One of the difficulties in our way, and not the least, is the party differences which have heretofore divided those who now find themselves united against the administration. Where bad men coalesce, it is necessary that the good of all parties should combine. Where a fatal attack is about to be made, on the purity of our institutions, and the attempt is openly made to subvert the rights of the people, it behooves all who are desirous of maintaining these main pillars of our political edifice, to forget minor differences, and unite in one great and common defence. But still to maintain harmony among persons of various opinions so united it is necessary that the spirit of mutual conciliation should be carefully cherished. In looking through the U. S. I can find no man but yourself, who as the great leader of such a party, can harmonize the elements of discord, and give energy, unanimity and success to those who are fighting the battles of liberty and the Constitution. On your life and health by dear Sir, at this time, may depend the future prosperity and glory of your Country. May the God of mercies have you in his holy keeping, and may the remainder of your days be blessed, with peace,

## Library of Congress

prosperity, and honor! Having trespassed far beyond the limits I had assigned to myself, I must conclude by requesting that mine and Mrs. Hayne's affectionate remembrances may be presented to Mrs. Jackson, and to assure her and yourself that all of my family (even our little boys who still remember and speak of you,) will always cherish for both of you the highest respect and esteem.

yours sincerely

P. S. My brother and his Lady spend their summer in Charleston. They are well, and desire to be kindly remembered to Mrs. J. and yourself.